

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering the present application and for indicating that claims 2 and 4 include allowable subject matter. Please reconsider the present application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-5 and 7 were pending in the present application. New claims 8-16 have been added by way of this reply. Thus, claims 1-5, 7, and 8-16 are now pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 8 are independent. Claims 3, 5, and 7 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1, claims 9-12 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 8, and claims 13-16 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 2.

Amendments to the Claims

New claims 8-16 have been added by way of this reply. Support for new claims 8-16 can be found, for example, in original claims 1-5 and 7, paragraphs [0056] and [0057], and Figs. 8 and 9. No new matter has been added by way of the amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2 and 4 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 2 and 4 were rewritten into independent form in the previously filed reply. Thus, claims 2 and 4 stand allowable.

Objections to the Drawings

Applicant traversed the objections to the drawings in the Reply to Final Office Action filed December 14, 2006.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 of the present application was rejected under U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,081,564 ("Mizoguchi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,945,672 ("Du"). The patentability of claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 were set forth in the Reply to Final Office Action filed December 14, 2006.

New claims

New claims 13-16 depend, either directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 2. Thus, claims 13-16 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 2.

New claim 8 carries all limitations of claim 1. Thus, claim 8 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 9-12 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 8. Thus, claims 9-12 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply to be responsive to all outstanding issues and place the application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or any other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account No. 50-0591, under Order No. 02008/142001 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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